concerned High Court. Also, in exercise of powers conferred under proviso to article 309 read with article 233 and 234 of the Consititution, the State Governments frame rules and regulations for their judicial officers, in consultation with their respective High Courts. The members of the State judicial Service are employees of State Government and are governed by these rules and regulations. Central Government is not concerned with any of the aforesaid functions and as such, has no role in this regard.

Superannuation age of Judges of the Supreme Court is governed by the provisions of article 124 of the Constitution of India. Clause (2) of article 124 provides that every judge of the Supreme Court shall hold office until he attains the age of sixty-five years. Similarly, Clause (1) of article 217 provides that every judge of a High Court shall hold office until he attains the age of sixty-two years.

Pending cases in courts

†2953. SHRIMATI SUSHMA SWARAJ: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that 2 crore 85 lac cases are pending in various High Courts and subordinate courts in the country;

(b) if so, the efforts being made to dispose of these cases; and

(c) whether out- of-court settlement of cases is also being considered?

THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H. R. BHARDWAJ): (a) to (c) As per available information 39.9 lakh cases in the High Courts and 2.63 crore cases in the Subordinate courts were pending as on 31-12-2006.

With a view to reducing pendency in the courts; Government has taken steps to increase the judge strength from time to time and has extended the terms of Central assistance to Fast Track Courts for a period of five years beyond 31-3-2005 *i.e.* upto 31-3-2010. Other measures like grouping of cases involving common question of law and application of Information and Communication Technology in the courts have also been taken.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

Tribunals like Central Administrative Tribunal, State Administrative Tribunals, etc. have been set up to dispose of cases in different areas. Government has encouraged alternative modes of disposal which include mediation, negotiation and arbitration. The Government proposes to establish Gram Nyayalayas in the rural areas to provide speedy justice and reduce pendency.

Pending criminal cases

2954. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of LAW AND JUSTICE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of criminal cases, showing complaint cases and police cases separately, and of civil cases pending as on 31st December, 2006 in the Trial Courts and Appeals Courts respectively;

(b) the State-wise details of the actual *vis-a-vis* sanctioned strengths of judicial officers in trial courts and in the High Courts as on 1st January, 2000, 2004 and 2007;

(c) whether any rationale, namely disposal of cases per capita by the judicial officers, are taken into consideration in sanctioning strength of judges, court-wise and their appointments;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, what criteria is being considered presently?

THE MINISTER OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI H.R. BHARDWAJ): (a) Administration of justice being a State subject, details of complaint cases, police cases, civil cases pending in the trial courts and Appeal courts are not complied in totality in this Department. The pendency position in the Subordinate Courts and in the High Courts as reported to this Department is enclosed at Statements I and II (*See* below).

(b) to (e) With regard to subordinate judiciary, the Supreme Court, in its judgement of 21st March, 2002, in All India Judges' Association & Ors. *Vs.* Union of India & Ors. (all State Governments and Union Territories are also party to this case), directed that an increase in the Judge strength